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POPE AND BISHOPS

Gregory Baum

THE SPIRIT AND CONVERSION

Fulton J. Sheen

"CATECHETICAL CROSSROADS"

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IT SEEMS TO ME

There's A Reform On!

During World War II some irate citizens, exasperated at the "business-as-usual" attitude of many, used to say, "Don't you know there's a war on?" With something of the same puzzled irritation, many Catholic leaders are saying in a thousand ways—"There's a reform on!"

Father Hans Küng expresses this urgency very well in the preface to his enlightening book, *The Council in Action*. "Vatican II is not an end but a beginning," he contends. "Everything discussed and decided at it needs to be explained and, above all, put into practice. The real work has to be done after the Council; in the Churches of each continent and country, and town and village, by believing Christians in all their different ministries and offices . . . The Council is our Council," he concludes. "It represents our worries and problems, our expectations and hopes."

In view of all this it makes rather doleful reading to see an editorial entitled "Disease of Irrelevance" in the always sprightly and relevant *Ave Maria* (Oct. 19, 1963).

"The Disease of Irrelevance is a national plague" is its verdict. Why this severe indictment? It marshals various clear indications of a neglect in our parishes — East and West — regarding the issues before the Council. One significant item impressed me particularly. It was from the syndicated column of Monsignor George W. Casey of Boston:

"Don't our Catholics in the East here know that there is a Council on and a revolution of sorts? Judging by the topics announced for the forthcoming meetings in the publicity they cadge from the newspapers, they do not."

In letters and in conversations with priests who are diligent in preparing their congregations for the decisions of the Council, they indicate a wide preference for two sources containing material suitable for sermons and occasional talks. Some like Father Küng's book mentioned above; others are enthusiastic about *The Johannine Council* by the great Bernard Haring.

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POPE AND BISHOPS

Gregory Baum

As this is being written, at the tail-end of October, the discussions in the conciliar hall are proving to be much less dramatic than last year. The present schema on the Church expresses an intermediary position, no bishop is totally against it. The interventions on the floor go beyond it, or try to bring to a halt a movement which is on the point of becoming universal. In this fashion the first three chapters—on the mystery of the Church, the hierarchical ministry, and the laity—have been discussed with great frankness and, it seems to me, with growing unanimity. There is a small and vocal opposition to the theological evolution that is taking place, but the arguments produced by this group in the conciliar hall lack breadth and vision, and hence are devoid of real force.

The conflict is much graver in the Theological Commission, the commission responsible for the present schema as well as the rewriting of it according to the wishes of the Council Fathers. It is still chaired by Cardinal Ottaviani. The Theological Commission is not, as it should be, a mirror of the discussions at the Council. Many of the issues which have been settled in the hall have to be argued out again. During these weeks the Commission should study and catalogue the large number of interventions and be working overtime on a new draft in keeping with the wishes of the Fathers. The Liturgical Commission has given an excellent example of how a vast amount of work can be handled quickly and competently. The Theological Commission, however, has not been doing much work, and one may well wonder why its chairman does not convoke it more often and demand that the amendments of the Fathers be classified and studied. If this delay continues, there will not be a single chapter of *De Ecclesia* ready to be submitted to the Council before the end of this

session. It is not impossible that this delaying technique will eventually provoke a crisis in the Theological Commission which will have to be calmed by an intervention of the Pope.

It is certain, or almost so, that a new chapter will be inserted into the schema on the Church. After chapter I on the mystery of the Church, a new chapter on the Church as God's people will precede the chapter on the hierarchical ministry. There are many reasons for this. Before a study of hierarchy and laity, one should announce and explain that the Church is a single family, a brotherhood, that prior to any division into groups it is one in faith and baptism, and that any separation created after baptism by the sacrament of orders can never destroy the basic unity and solidarity within the Church.

This was one of the principal points of Bishop de Smedt's famous intervention at the Council's first session and the subject of his pastoral letter which has been studied and appreciated in many countries (*The Priesthood of the Faithful*, Paulist Press, New York, 1962, 95 cents). The People of God as a whole have been called and consecrated, through the baptism of faith, to participate in the one priesthood of the New Testament, the priesthood of Jesus Christ. The priestly activity of the people, their teaching and their action to transform the world, are a share in the three-fold office of Christ as priest, teacher and Lord; or more profoundly, removing the last remnants of a Pelagian misunderstanding, the mystery of the Church is the presence of Christ worshipping through His baptized

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people, of Christ teaching through His believing people, and of Christ exercising His lordship over creation through the labors in charity of His people in the world.

In this perspective, the role of the hierarchy in the Church is a ministry unto the people. Bishops have a ministerial priesthood in order to make the worship offered by the whole people more perfect, more universal, more united to Christ in the Eucharist. Bishops are teachers with a charism of truth to make more secure the teaching of the whole people; and bishops have special power to rule in order to coordinate the action of the whole people so that their total sanctification may be more effectual. We have here the principles for a theology of the hierarchy and a theology of the laity.

Discussing the present chapter III on the laity, Bishop de Smedt has again made an intervention recalling that the whole activity of the laity must be understood as a share in the work of Christ, or even as the action of Christ who is present within us continuing His messianic role in His people. It is to be hoped that such a theology will eventually determine the tone of the revised chapter on the laity. Unless the work and freedom of the laity are Christologically founded, they will always look like concessions made to the laymen through the generosity of their bishops. We must learn that Christ works through lay people as much and as truly, though differently, as through His ordained priests.

There is another obvious advantage in the insertion of a chapter on God's people at the beginning of the schema. If we only speak of the Church as the Mystical Body or the Bride of Christ, we may be tempted to close our eyes to the historical reality that we are still on pilgrimage in this world. It is indeed a great mystery that God in His mercy makes use of a community of fragile and imperfect men to make them an instrument of salvation in this world, and it is this aspect of divine condescension which the chapter on God's people should bring out. We are sinners. We are blind, stubborn; we make many mistakes, and despite the gifts of faith, hope and charity, despite the gift of infallibility granted the episcopal college and the sacramental efficacy of Word and liturgy, we remain in many ways an ignorant, faltering, and constantly tempted people.

We are indeed a holy people, because Christ works within us, forgives us our sins, sanctifies us sacramentally through His body and blood, and teaches us the Gospel with certainty through bishops led by His Spirit; at the same time we remain a pilgrim people, exposed to the desert of our infidelity, longing for the end of our journey, the blessed return of the Risen One.

This we must admit if we wish to avoid all "triumphalism." If we only announce to the world that we are the mystical body of the Lord, His holy and spotless Bride, the honest unbeliever will reply, "You are completely mistaken about yourself. We know you much better. You are involved in the tribulations of this life as much as other men." In order to make the sanctity which the Church has irrevocably received in Christ a credible message, we must acknowledge first our pilgrim state.

Salvation History

There is another, a more profound reason why a chapter on the people of God is so significant. It places the Church into the context of salvation history. God's mercy to men did not begin with Jesus and is not confined to Christians. From the beginning, God's ineffable mercy has been operative in humanity. From Scripture we know that history was guided and that its climax was the coming of Christ. God's economy of salvation did not begin with Christ, it was a continuation of the mercy announced to Israel.

The Church may be called the *new* People of God, if we consider her regeneration in the Spirit, but she may also be called the *true* People of God since she is the continuation of God's first chosen people of Israel. Only if we recall that we are still the Israel on pilgrimage, will we understand the meaning of Church history. Despite the radical holiness which Christ produces daily in the Church, the treatment which God accorded to Israel in the Old Testament, His mercy in forgiving and His mercy in chastizing and purifying still contains a message for the Church of today. God still reprimands us through our defeats; He still scourges and purifies us through our failures; and unless we acknowledge that the old Israel is alive within us, we are tempted to regard ourselves as perfect, beyond the

judgment of God, and not subject, as a Church, to His punishment.

These remarks indicate the dimensions of a chapter on the People of God. Yet since it has not yet been written, it is difficult to say how much of this kind of biblical thinking it will contain. Such a chapter might also be the place to indicate that the Church as the new Israel is so deeply grafted on the old Israel, as on an "olive tree" (see Rom. 11:19), that even those descendants of the old Israel who do not acknowledge the kingdom brought by Christ continue to be linked to the Church through friendship and a common destiny, i.e., they continue to be our brothers.

The present chapter II, on the hierarchical structure of the Church, has, until now, stirred up the greatest controversy at the Council. The principal issue at stake is the collegiality of the bishops. Even if this word was almost completely new to most Catholics, even to the bishops themselves, it has now become a common notion. We realize again that a bishop is not simply the head of a diocese, but as a member of the episcopal body or college he is first of all co-responsible for the life of the whole Church. Collegiality, in the wide sense, means the responsibility of each member for the total life of the corporation to which he belongs.

The dogmatic foundation for this collegiality in the Church is the Catholic understanding of the Scriptures. Since Christ chose the Twelve to be the foundation of the Church and among them Peter to be their head and therefore supreme in the community, we believe that the bishops as a group or college are the successors of the Twelve, i.e., heirs of those prerogatives of the Apostles which were communicable to others. Within the episcopal college it is the successor of Peter, the pope, who exercises the role of the head of the college and of the supreme bishop in the Church.

It is true to say, therefore, that the episcopal college holds supreme authority in teaching and ruling in the Church. This is not said in detriment to the doctrine of the First Vatican Council which declared the pope's supreme power to teach and to rule. What the Second Vatican Council tries to clarify is that the pope is not the only supreme authority in the Church, that the episcopal college to which he belongs as

head, and this inseparably so, is also a seat of supreme authority. Papacy and episcopacy are the two pillars on which the Church is being built by Christ.

Many people find this doctrine confusing. They ask who, in the last analysis, has more authority, the pope or the episcopal college? But the question reveals a basic misunderstanding. Just as Peter was one of the Twelve, so the bishop of Rome belongs inseparably to the episcopal college. Pope and college are not two distinct entities which face one another. The pope belongs to the college as presiding bishop. Without him, there is no college and without the college of bishops, there is no pope. In other words, the relation of pope and bishops is an organic one, determined by faith and charity, by the common concern for the Church, and there is no legal or juridical formula which can express the precise relationship between the pope and the college to which he belongs.

World Episcopate

We will have to relearn to use our Catholic vocabulary with more care. When we speak of bishops, we usually do not include the pope; now it becomes imperative that we learn to include the bishop of Rome when we speak of the world episcopate. When we say Council, we do not refer to the group of bishops gathered around the pope facing him as one who is outside and above the Council, but we include the pope. So deeply is the pope linked to the episcopal college, that many theologians say that there is really only *one* subject of supreme authority in the Church, namely the episcopal college, and that this authority of the college may be exercised by the bishops acting in union with the pope, or also by the pope alone, without the consent of the bishops. But even when the pope acts or speaks alone, as supreme bishop he does so as a member and head of the episcopal college and, as it were, in the name of all the bishops.

Looking at the episcopal college in this way makes it obvious that in the exercise of the supreme ministerial power in the Church, both in teaching and ruling, there is a dialogue-structure. The acknowledgment of this fact, which is difficult for some circles, will have profound effects on the

whole of Catholic life. No wonder that there is some opposition to collegiality. The present schema teaches this collegiality in a weak and somewhat ambiguous way, and many bishops have insisted most emphatically that it be declared with greater clarity.

One manifestation of this collegiality would be episcopal conferences with the authority to teach and legislate. Each bishop, by the sacramental character of his office, is immediately responsible for the common good in the Church, quite apart from the jurisdiction given him over his own diocese, and hence the bishops of a certain area or territory are able to exercise their power in common, with the approval of the bishop of Rome. This joint action with authority flows naturally from episcopal collegiality. Such power would not be a concession of the Apostolic See to episcopal conferences, but rather the acknowledgment by this Holy See of powers which proceed from the very nature of the bishops as a group.

Local Independence

One has the definite impression, however, that some bishops are afraid of this application of collegiality. They fear that an authoritative episcopal conference would stand between them and Rome, and would dissolve the last shreds of their local independence. They fear that a majority of bishops in their country would be able to bind them, against their own convictions.

It seems to me, however, that the notion of collegiality is so new to the Church of our day that we must reflect a little longer on the implications. I do not think that a bishop will lose his proper independence through an episcopal conference with legislative power. On the contrary, some of the legislation which he now receives from Rome, produced in offices where there is little knowledge of local conditions, will eventually be made by a body of bishops in which he has a voice. In other words, the binding power of the episcopal conference will not introduce additional burdens, but rather replace some of the legislation which now comes from Rome. Secondly, the competence of the episcopal conferences will be clearly circumscribed and limited to those questions where common action is of great advantage for the whole area. It does

not imply that all movements and private initiative of bishops in their dioceses will have to pass through the episcopal conference.

It seems to me that decentralization would be useless and even dangerous to the Church, if it did not imply jurisdictional authority held by episcopal conferences. If a greater area of self-determination were given to bishops individually, we would not only have an embarrassing divergence of policy from diocese to diocese, but the whole progress of the renewal movement in the Church would be retarded. The bishops would become much more powerful in their dioceses without, at the same time being engaged in a dialogue with other bishops. They could shrug their shoulders at the decisions of an episcopal conference; and thus the decentralization and the partnership which is being introduced at the highest level at the papal See of Rome might lead (heaven forbid!) to a greater centralization and lack of partnership in the government of the diocese.

If within a clearly determined area the episcopal conference were able to decide with authority, in questions such as the language and the pattern of the liturgy, the meeting of this conference would create a conciliar spirit, provoke responsible discussion and the consequent education of the bishops now out of touch with the renewal, draw in specialists from all over the country, and produce an enthusiasm for the new movements which would readily penetrate to the people. The progress of the renewal must not be made to depend on single bishops. The bishops of the world will not permit any one to say that they fought for collegiality and hence decentralization at the Council in order to get more independent power for themselves, rather than to achieve greater collegiality even on the local level and share responsibility with their brothers in the episcopate.

Another word for collegiality is teamwork. We must admit that clerical education in the Church has, until now, not laid much stress on this notion. There is little teamwork among dioceses. How much work, talent and money could be saved, and how greater could our impact be if we were able to collaborate more spontaneously! Each diocese is an independent unit, financially and otherwise, and each parish is an independent unit, too,

financially and otherwise; cooperation and common action are rather the exception. Even the work in a single parish cannot usually be described as teamwork. Each assistant priest is assigned his work by the pastor, and each one goes ahead to perform his task as a lonely man. He does not even look at what his brother in the priesthood does, even in the same parish, lest he say a critical word and get into trouble.

Team Leaders

The notion of teamwork, which is becoming daily more important in the world, even in scientific experiments, would be of greatest value to the Church. Christian enthusiasm, confidence in others, sharing of responsibility, and mutual discussion and information, would make our ecclesiastical institutions much more effective. Superiors are not bosses, but leaders of a team. Collegiality may be an abstract word, obscure

and uninteresting, but the reality which it describes and points to, is practical and easy to understand.

Very much depends now on the Theological Commission: How will it formulate this principle of collegiality? At the end of the discussion on the second chapter, the Moderators announced that four questions were to be submitted to the Council the following day, questions on which the Fathers would be asked to vote. One of these questions dealt with collegiality. Yet, strangely enough, the questions have not yet been announced. It is an open secret in Rome that the reactionaries of the Curia, who have by no means abandoned the battle, have tried to stop the matter. But since the four Moderators, who include Cardinal Suenens, have direct access to the president of the Council, Pope Paul, there is no reason to worry. From his public utterances it has become clear that Pope Paul is far ahead of the conciliar documents.

THE SPIRIT AND CONVERSION

Fulton J. Sheen

As the Spirit does not fail, but is given to those who ask, souls are no more difficult to convert now than at any other time. The approach must be different, as the approach to the Roman was different from that to the Jew. In psychological terms, every conversion starts with a crisis, moral or spiritual. The moral crisis begins with a moment or a situation involving some kind of suffering, physical, emotional or spiritual; with a dialectic, a tension, a pull, a duality, or a conflict. The crisis is accompanied, on the one hand, by a profound sense of one's own helplessness, and on the other hand, by an equally certain conviction that God alone can supply what the individual lacks.

If there were only a sense of helplessness, there would be despair, pessimism, eventual suicide. This is, indeed, the condition of the post-Christian pagan: he feels the total in-

adequacy of his own inner resources against the overwhelming odds of a cruel universe and falls into despair. He has one-half of the necessary condition for conversion—namely, a sense of crisis—but he fails to link up his powerlessness with the Divine Power which sustains and nourishes the soul. In such a situation, paganism gives place to what might be called creative despair: "despair," because the man recognizes his spiritual disease; "creative," because he knows that only a Divine Physician can bring healing.

The crisis of conversion is sometimes spiritual rather than moral. This is frequent

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among those who have been seeking perfection, but are not yet possessed of the fullness of the faith and sacraments. Some such souls have led a good life on the natural plane; they have been generous to the poor and kind to their neighbors and have furthered at least a vague fellowship with all peoples. Others have had a smattering of the supernatural life; they have led as Christ-like a life as they knew how, living up to faith in Him as they saw His light. The crisis in their souls begins at the moment when they either recognize that they have tremendous potentialities not yet exercised or begin to yearn for a religious life which will make greater demands on them.

Up to that moment of crisis, they have lived on the surface of their souls. The tension deepens as they realize that, like a plant, they have roots which need greater spiritual depths and branches meant for communion with the heavens above. The growing sense of dissatisfaction with their own ordinariness is accompanied by a passionate craving for surrender, sacrifice, and abandonment to God's will. The shift from mediocrity to love may be occasioned through the example of a saint, the inspiration of a spiritual book, the desire to escape from mere symbols to divine reality. However it comes, there is a duality present from the moment the soul hears Christ saying:

But you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. MATTHEW 5:48

Conversion is the introduction of a new Spirit. The unconverted man has an incompatible Rh factor in his human nature, which is corruptive; it is overcome by making him "share the Divine Nature" (II PETER 1:4) through a blood infusion of Calvary and Pentecost. Conversion, therefore, is totally different from proselytism, which is only a change in group membership, or the putting on of a new label. But conversion is a *metanoia*, a change of character, the becoming a new man.

The work of conversion is accomplished by the Holy Spirit, through the use of human means. The Spirit may place a rod in the hands of a shepherd. His action may induce an awareness of the absence of God in the soul, or it may create a sense of God's presence and of His actual grace working in the soul. In all instances, the Holy Spirit illumines the mind to see a truth not visible

before, and strengthens the will to do things never before attempted. Job speaks of one way in which the Spirit touches the soul in suffering:

Sometimes in visions of the night, when deep sleep falls upon men as they lie abed, He speaks words of revelation, to teach them the lesson they need. This is one means by which He will turn a man away from his designs, purge him of his pride; and so the grave is disappointed, the sword misses its prey. Or else He will use the pains of the sick-bed for a man's correction, and leave his whole frame wasted with disease.

JOB 33:15-19

The priest must never think that his preaching and zeal won the convert. Lydia listened to Paul, but the Scripture says, and the Lord opened her heart so that she was attentive to Paul's preaching.

ACTS 16:15

Here was a woman already religious, described as a woman of prayer; yet her mind needed the tuition of the Holy Spirit in order to understand what she had heard. Incidentally, Lydia was the first convert in Europe and it was from her house that the evangelization of Europe began.

Gradual Action

Sometimes the revelation of the Spirit is gradual, as with the woman at the well. She first called Our Lord a "Jew" (JOHN 4:9), then a "man" (JOHN 4:12), then a gentleman when she addressed Him as "Sir" (JOHN 4:15), then "a prophet" (JOHN 4:19), then the "Messias" (JOHN 4:25), and finally "Saviour of the world" (JOHN 4:42).

The jailer at Philippi was the second convert in Europe (ACTS 16:27-34), and he was moved by the Spirit through fear and through the word of Paul. The Ethiopian treasurer illustrates how the Holy Spirit directs a priest to one whose conversion is divinely willed:

The Spirit said to Philip, Go up to that chariot and keep close by it. ACTS 8:29
The Ethiopian already had some concept of religion, for he was reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. The Holy Spirit moves even souls dedicated to sorcery and magic. Such souls in their darkness may be searching for the truth. A sorcerer named Elymas had tried to turn the Proconsul, Sergius

Saul, from the faith, the rudiments of which he had received through the preaching of Paul. "Then Saul, whose other name was Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, . . ." (ACTS 13:8) blasted the sorcerer. Incidentally, this is the first time that the Scriptures give Saul the Roman name of Paul. Denouncing Elymas as a son of the devil, Paul struck him blind—his first miracle. One wonders if Paul recalled that he himself was struck blind at the time of his conversion. Was it in order that the temporary blindness might give light, as did his own? Venerable Bede says, "The Apostle remembering his own case, knew that by the darkening of the eye, the mind's darkness might be restored to light." Sergius Paulus then became strengthened in his faith. It was the first appearance of Christianity before a Roman aristocrat and official.

No soul is beyond conversion. The Lord assures us through the prophet Joel that He will make good the bad years.

Profitless years, when the locust ravaged you, Gnaw-all and Ruin-all and Spoiler, that great army of mine I let loose among you, they shall be made good. JOEL 2:25

Converting souls in keeping with our vocation to be "fishers of men" is not easy, because each catch takes its toll of effort. But losing is the condition of gaining in the realm of the Spirit. We never profit another without being "inwardly aware of the power" that has proceeded from us, as Our Lord was when He healed the woman with the issue of blood (MARK 5:30). But who are the energetic priests? Are they not the zealous priests? Nothing is as fatiguing as boredom. Filled with the Spirit of Christ, a priest working with souls is like the burning bush which was aflame, but did not burn at (EXODUS 3:2). Every exhaustion of spiritual energy by a priest creates a vacuum for a richer endowment of the Spirit, until souls become his passion:

It is He Who gives the weary fresh Spirit, Who fosters strength and vigour where strength and vigour is none.

ISAIAH 40:29

Every pastor should from time to time go through the baptismal record and see how many sheep have been brought to the Shepherd in the course of his ministry. How often does he find a name inscribed in the Book of Life with his own name listed in

the column which reads: "Baptized by——"? A parish can wither without converts for years, as for fifteen years the House of God lay unfinished, until God spoke to the people saying:

The Lord of hosts bids you put heart into the work; is not He, the Lord of hosts, at your side? AGGAEUS 2:5

So in a parish without spiritual stone being added to spiritual stone, the Lord bids us work. There can be no work apart from strength. We supply the work, God the power. It is comfort that makes us shirk the work of conversion. We are clothed, but are we warmed by the fire of Pentecost? The wages we earn—are they put into a bag with holes, or are we laying up the richer treasury of souls and covering up the mountain of our own failings? Saving souls is the assurance of our salvation.

My brethren, if one of you strays from the truth, and a man succeeds in bringing him back, let him be sure of this; to bring back erring feet into the right path means saving a soul from death, means throwing a veil over a multitude of sins.

JAMES 5:19,20

We priests are only spiritual farmers; we till the soil, God drops the seed. We make no converts. We must never count up our converts or we will one day begin to think that we, not the Lord, made them. The same divine energy that wrought Creation and Redemption saves souls.

Giving Instructions

Instructing is not arguing. One can win an argument and lose a soul. The priest must be patient with bigots. If we believed the lies they believe about the Church, we would hate it a thousand times more than they.

The priest must try to discover if the objections against the faith expressed by an enquirer are in fact intellectual, or if instead they are basically moral, that is, if they are rooted in some improper behavior. So-called "reasons" are sometimes rationalizations to justify the way people live. It is important to find out not only what people say about Christ and His Church but why they say it. This was the technique used by Our Lord with the woman at the well. She introduced a theological problem when her real problem was a moral one, namely, her

five husbands. He, nevertheless, did not cast her aside even though He saw through her pretence. Instead, He showed her what her real problem was, and she was converted.

The priest's best approach to enquirers is neither to prove they are wrong, nor to prove that he is right, but simply to offer bread to the hungry and drink to the thirsty. Our Faith is the satisfaction of the soul's desire, not the didactic presentation of a syllogism. The priest must prepare himself carefully for every discussion with an enquirer. Before starting to instruct, he should spend an hour in thinking up analogies, examples, and answers to possible objections.

To save souls we must be holy. The Lord does not use dirty tools. How can we go to sinners if they say: "Physician, heal thyself" (LUKE 4:23)? Nor can we bid fallen-aways to return to the obedience they owe the Church if they are able to question our own way of living and acting:

An errand these prophets ran, but none of Mine; a message they gave, but not of My sending. Privy to My design had they been, ah, then they should have uttered My own warnings, and so I might have turned My people aside from false paths, and erring thoughts!

JEREMIAS 23:21,22

Instruction to the enquirer should be so formulated as to prove that we love what we believe. If we show little enthusiasm for the sublime truth we communicate, how shall the convert learn to love that truth?

Our love of souls must be persistent. We get used to reading the Parable of the Good Shepherd, but do we understand that for us priests it is a spelling out of our obligation to seek the lost sheep. Leaving a dinner, breaking an evening's entertainment, interrupting a siesta, all such efforts are summed up in leaving

those ninety-nine others on the mountain-side, and go out to look for the one that is straying.

MATTHEW 18:12

Nothing unspiritual is sacred in the face of a spiritual need.

Even the "banished" ones, those outside the Church through bad marriages, those who spurned the Sacred Heart though He spurned them not—are not these part of our ministry?

Never a soul will God suffer to be lost in the reckoning; still He busies Himself

with remedies to save the life of him who is banished. II KINGS 14:14

The banished son of the Church remains a son and the true priest grieves as long as he is away from his home. How many are the couples in invalid marriages who are ready to live as brother and sister, if only this possibility were properly presented to them? God's love is active on behalf of even the worst and the unworthiest of souls. Grace is given to many who were written off by priests of little faith, for God has said, "the sinner's death is none of My contriving!" (EZECHIEL 33:11). Is not God a Father and is not the priest a "father"? We must never imitate the elder brother who would not receive back the prodigal. Here were two sons who lost the Father's love: one because he was "too good" and the other because he was "too bad"; but the latter it was who found that love again (LUKE 15:11-32).

As His servants, we have confidence in His power:

There is a stronger power at work in you, than in the world. I JOHN 4:4
Our zeal for conversions will go through three stages: a heavenly prayer, exhausting identification with others, and finally, the healing of the soul. St. Mark tells us (7:34) that Our Lord, when confronted with a deaf and dumb man, likewise performed the miracle of curing him in three steps. "... He looked up to heaven, and sighed; He said, Ephpheta, (that is, Be opened)."

The Spirit's Gift

The condition of all apostolate is a realization that Heaven grants it. To look in the first instance anywhere else, for example, to publicity or organization, is to miss the source of power. If we make this mistake, we can next anticipate that costly pity and compassion in which we are one with the ignorant, the dull and the deaf. Only then is the eye opened to faith, the ear to the sound of the word of God. No one can give sight to the spiritually blind unless he gazes into heaven. What we give depends on what we receive.

How often Our Lord's sighs are mentioned in Scripture, for example, at the sight of the hardness of hearts and unbelief, at the sight of a leper, a hungry multitude, in the face of hostility and over the dead body of

Lazarus! All the ills and evil of man's fate and conduct weighed on His priestly Heart. So the worth of our efforts is in proportion to the expanse of sympathy and feeling we have for unconverted souls. The depth of a priest's compassion is the measure of his apostolic success.

Here, too, it is pertinent to meditate on the relation between the love of the Holy Spirit and the Eucharistic Presence on the one hand, and our sympathy for souls on the other. The gaze and the sigh went together in Our Lord. Likewise, the look at the tabernacle and the sympathy for the sick are twins. He who prays, sympathizes; he who has the Spirit has a body that takes up a cross daily for his people; he whose eyes sweep the heavens for the Spirit, has the keener gaze for the lost sheep of earth. The habitual communion with God is the root of the priest's compassion. Pity is second; Our Lord is first.

When the Spirit seeks to work in us for souls, our nature shrinks from the task. But it is something like swimming: it becomes a joy after the shock of the first plunge. We grow weary, of course, but God is unwearied in giving us new strength. Age is not the determining factor. The young who lack the Spirit tire more quickly than the old who have it.

Youth itself may weaken, the warrior faint and flag, but those who trust in the Lord will renew their strength, like eagles new-fledged; hasten, and never grow weary of hastening, march on, and never weaken on the march.

ISAIAH 40:30,31

The natural man steadily tends to exhaustion. All life lived on the creature level digs its own grave. But the man who trusts in the Unwearied God does not follow the earthly law of fatigue. Unzealous priests are tired in mind before they are tired in body. Their exhaustion is ennui due to the loss of the Spirit. But the true apostle, though he may sit like his Master, "tired after His journey, by the well" (JOHN 4:6), can nevertheless account a converted soul as "food to eat of which you know nothing" (JOHN 4:32). Grace abhors a vacuum, as nature does. The empty house of the Gospel that was not filled by the Spirit was occupied by seven devils.

Thanks to the Spirit, though the priest grows older in years, he becomes younger

through ascent to the altar of God where youth is renewed. Exertion without the Spirit is impatience; impatience, touched by the Spirit, is zeal for souls. As the diamond cutter works diamonds and the sculptor stone, so the priest works souls.

Like a shepherd He tends them, gathers up the lambs and carries them in His bosom.

ISAIAH 40:11

In the parish, in the school, the priest will watch that not one such soul is plucked out of his hands (JOHN 10:11-28). Authority over the Church and its souls was not given to Peter until he had made a triple promise to love. Any authority the priest exercises has the same foundation. The priest will be as tender in love to his people as Jacob was to his flock:

I may lose a whole herd if I overdrive them.

GENESIS 33:13

It has been said that a characteristic gesture of many priests, when they take the Bible from a shelf (after looking for it for several minutes), is to tap it with the hand to knock the dust off. This may explain why pulpit orators are so fond of a few routine texts, such as: "Come you that have received a blessing from My Father" (MATTHEW 25:34), or "Come to me, all you that labored and are burdened" (MATTHEW 11:28); and on Mission Sunday: "Go out, making disciples of all nations" (MATTHEW 28:19). Why is it that the less prepared the preacher is, the more he is inclined to find fault with his parishioners? And the less he examines his own conscience in meditation, the more he resorts to moralistic nagging.

The saintly priest, on the contrary, tells his flock: "We are Christ's ambassadors, then, and God appeals to you through us" (II CORINTHIANS 5:20). But if God appeals, He does so through His Word: "I preached God's Gospel to you" (II CORINTHIANS 11:7).

The preacher will do well to ponder on the technique used by St. Paul at Thessalonica:

Over a space of three sabbaths he reasoned with them out of the scriptures, expounding these and bringing proofs from them that the sufferings of Christ and His rising from the dead were fore-ordained; the Christ, he said, is none other than the Jesus whom I am preaching to you.

ACTS 17:2,3

When he spoke to King Agrippa, Paul used exactly the same method of preaching:

Yet there is nothing in my message which goes beyond what the prophets spoke of, and Moses spoke of, as things to come; a suffering Christ, and One Who should shew light to His people and to the Gentiles by being the first to rise from the dead. ACTS 26:22

St. Peter uses the Scriptures in exactly the same way to develop the truths of the faith:

Salvation was the aim and quest of the prophets, and the grace of which they prophesied has been reserved for you. The Spirit of Christ was in them, making known to them the sufferings which Christ's cause brings with it, and the glory that crowns them; when was it to be, and how was the time of it to be recognized? I PETER 1:10,11

Can the preacher today do better than Peter and Paul? Regardless of how many times people hear the Scriptures, they can always find something new in them. St. Paul has set out the reason why this is so:

Everything in the scripture has been divinely inspired, and has its uses; to instruct us, to expose our errors, to correct our faults, to educate us in holy living; so God's servant will become a master of his craft, and each noble task that comes will find him ready for it.

II TIMOTHY 3:16,17

For All Ages

The Scriptures are not merely a record of historical events that have passed. They constitute for every age a revelation of God's mind and will to each individual. Many of the incidents recorded in the Old Testament provide a perspective to give us a fuller understanding of events that occurred later and are described in the New Testament. Genesis 21:10-12, for example, recounts a quarrel in Abraham's family. Ishmael, his child by Agar, mocked and insulted his younger child Isaac, the son of promise, whose mother was Sara. Sara sided with Isaac and decided that Agar and Ishmael should be driven out of Abraham's house. Such family quarrels and maternal revenge may not seem to have much pertinence until

we read Galatians 4:30, where St. Paul explains that the casting out of the bondswoman and her son was to show that they were yet in bondage to the Law, and were consequently not entitled to share in the inheritance of the Gospel.

Not only does Scripture derive its inspiration from the Spirit, but the Spirit alone makes its meaning clear. Before his conversion Paul was versed in the Scriptures, yet could not see in them that the Lord was the Christ. Our Blessed Lord told the Pharisees that they poured over the Scriptures but did not realize that they referred to Him (JOHN 5:39). Whatever beneficial effect was produced on the listener always came through the Holy Spirit.

Our preaching to you did not depend upon mere argument; power was there, and the influence of the Holy Spirit, and an effect of full conviction.

I THESSALONIANS 1:5

Lord And Savior

When St. Paul recalled the effect of his preaching on the Corinthians, he probably had in mind his lack of success in Athens. St. Paul had given a very learned talk at Athens, quoting several of the Greek poets, but the effect was limited to one or two conversions. St. Paul thereupon left Athens for Corinth. During the forty-mile trip, he must have meditated on his want of success and tried to determine why he had failed. Later on, when he wrote to the Corinthians, he contrasted preaching by philosophy and eloquence, and preaching by the power of the Spirit.

So it was, brethren, that when I came to you and preached Christ's message to you, I did so without any high pretensions to eloquence, or to philosophy. I had no thought of bringing you any other knowledge than that of Jesus Christ, and of Him as Crucified.

I CORINTHIANS 2:1-3

There are two kinds of knowledge about Christ: the speculative and the practical. The former is obtained by study, the latter only through the Holy Spirit who leads us to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior.

'CATECHETICAL CROSSROADS'

Tennant C. Wright, S.J.

God reveals His saving action in a set of historical events, centered in the person of Jesus Christ, revealed primarily in Scripture, projected into all time and space in the personalized liturgical mystery of the Church, and only fully understood and responded to in love—thus Bishop G. Emmett Carter recently summed up the central insights of the Church's catechetical renewal "Head and Heart," *America*, July 13, 1963).

Fortunately Bishop Carter was able to make a part in the two week catechetical institute held in August on the 400 acre farm at Grailville (Loveland, Ohio). There he found the ideals of the new catechesis he had sketched not only presented and discussed, but lived out. "Catechetical Crossroads," under the direction of Miss Eva Heischner of the Grail, gave the 100 catechists and catechetical directors who attended the experience of a living catechesis, of living Christianity.

The center of each day was the liturgy of the Mass. Priests, brothers, nuns, the laity, married and single, each morning became more profoundly one family as they worshipped together with prayer and song and movement. Christ was here, the Church was here in all its diversity (all continents were represented) and all its fullness, especially those mornings when Bishop Carter and Archbishop Karl J. Alter of Cincinnati invited us to worship around the altar.

Christ was projected into the time and space of 20th century America. We heard Him in the rhythms and melodies of Fr. Clarence Rivers' Mass in the negro idiom. We met Him each afternoon in the Bible celebrations; We listened to His word and homilies on His word in the thought patterns of America—1963; we allowed Him to speak in silence and we answered with psalms and songs Americans can enjoy singing. God's word in the liturgy was intended to be, and was in fact, the real center of all

formation during these two weeks. There was no longer a question of which comes first, catechesis or liturgy; they come together—they are inseparable.

As Fr. Gerard Sloyan said in his opening talk of the institute: "Christian formation is mostly *doing*—celebrating!" The Christian message that catechists proclaim is a series of events by which God entered into our history—by which He continues to enter it. The events are still happening and we are part of them; we must celebrate them. The assumption of Mary was an event, but it goes on in our liturgy, calling us across our lives and across all the ages of the world to that Parousia when the event will be complete in the resurrection of all our bodies. Only in our celebration of Mary's assumption, in our morning procession across the Ohio fields with so much color for our eyes and Christian song for our ears, only in entering into a so-friendly barn-made-oratory with expectancy and joy and excitement like the clash of cymbals — only in such a celebration on August 15th did we realize that the Assumption is the feast of our human bodies as well as Mary's. Christianity incarnates all of our humanity, sweeping us all (Mary first after her Son) in that great rolling wave towards the resurrection—towards that final age when we sing and dance and meet again in His glory.

But liturgy can only celebrate events if we know the meaning of the events. Jesus Christ acts and His actions are written in Scripture. What do His actions really mean? Fr. Marcel Van Caster, S.J. (Lumen Vitae, Brussels) urged the catechist to un-

The writer is located at St. Robert's Hall, Pomfret Center, Conn. We are grateful to him for sharing his observations on this significant catechetical institute at the Grail. Five of the main talks will appear in the Fall issue of *Perspectives* (21 West Superior St., Chicago 10, Ill.) Other valuable material from the institute is appearing in *The Bulletin*, Religious Education, Grailville, Loveland, Ohio.

derstand the context of Scripture, to find the *meaning* of God's actions—this is his prime study. Catechists are first heralds who proclaim events and their meanings. Doctrinal syntheses are good and necessary, but far more important is that wisdom which understands the personal relationships of love that Scripture (religion itself!) is all about: God's initiative through Christ, man's response with Christ, our meeting with the Father in Christ.

The meaning of Scripture, the events of God's action among us can only be experientially realized in the context of our times. A large part of all catechesis must be a deep meeting with and understanding of the men of our time. Before catechesis begins, before the great acts of Christ are ever proclaimed, we must understand the mentality of the modern non-Christian (whether in Africa, Japan, America, or wherever). As Fr. Alfonso Nebreda, S.J. (Gregorian University, Rome) stressed, before kerygma is proclaimed or catechesis explained, we must always begin with the "pre-evangelium" as he calls it. We must meet our hearers on the streets of *their* daily lives, we must first feel *their* hopes and fears, *their* joys and doubts. Only then can we love them—the first job of every Christian—and help them to that inner freedom to learn about Christ or make any future response of faith. Only when the non-Christian has felt the understanding and love (never coercion!) of Christ through the friendship of Christians will he have the desire or the courage to walk farther along that often initially frightening path towards Christ—as Fr. Josef Goldbrunner (Munich) often said, towards that *free* and responsible decision of faith upon which all depends!

Our Generation

If Christ is to project Himself *through us* into the 20th century we must not only meet our century in understanding and love, but we must understand every man as he grows towards those critical religious moments of life. To help towards such a psychological understanding of the growing child Miss Gladys Gordon (Catechetical Institute, Strasbourg) conducted a workshop on the adolescent, and Sisters Rose Therese C.S.J. (St. Louis) and Mary Charles O.S.B. (Okla-

homa City) one on the elementary school child. Miss Fleischner discussed *Crisis of Faith* by Fr. Pierre Babin, O.M.I., a study of the religious psychology of adolescents which she has translated and will be published this year by Herder and Herder.

The saving events of Jesus Christ, met in Scripture and experienced in the liturgy—this was the center of all the study, discussion, prayer, and even relaxation for these two weeks. But as Bishop Carter insisted, all "this divine action can be understood only in love and . . . there is no adequate response to love save love," and "in this mystery of love we have the mystery of the Church." Perhaps the strongest memory any of us took away from this institute was the atmosphere of Christian welcome in which we lived these two weeks. The mystery of Christ's Church was in the air—not just as institution nor set of doctrines, but as Fr. Bernard Cooke, S.J. (Marquette University) spoke of the Church: a living reality, to be accepted in faith, the mystery of our God-made-man Himself.

Total Response

Through the warm and continuing welcome of the Grail family all of us realized better what it is to be a Christian, we knew better how to respond with our whole persons to the love of Christ. Christianity at its root is not something to be taught but rather a personal faith to be caught. Unless the catechist has himself caught the good news of Jesus Christ by being welcomed into the contagious fire and peace and joy of a Christian community, there is small chance that he can communicate that good news.

The Grailville "Catechetical Crossroads" was a success for many reasons: because it gathered some of the catechetical experts for us to hear and talk with, because it provided the opportunity for most of the exciting currents in modern catechetics to surge to life before our eyes, but mainly because Grailville was that community of Christian faith and love which we catechists must first experience if we are to share with our students. Perhaps the catechist is only able to "teach all nations" if—even for a short time—he has *lived* the mystery of love of Him about whom we must teach.

READING I'VE LIKED

All who find the four volumes of *The Church's Year of Grace* by Pius Parsch spiritually invigorating will enjoy every bit as much *Seasons of Grace* by the same writer. And not a few may even prefer the latter one-volume work to the longer series. In any case, it is a distinct privilege to report that these refreshing homilies for each Sunday and some feasts of the liturgical year are available. (Herder and Herder: \$5.00). The book is thoroughly biblical, liturgical and deals with the most vital problems of life in theological writing that is lively as well as correct.

All catechists who are dedicated to the catechetical renewal will enjoy *In Memory of Me* by Edmund Flood, O.S.B. (Sheed and Ward, \$3.00). The writer is a disciple of the erudite authority Cyprian Vagaggaini (*Theological Dimensions of the Liturgy*) and writes on the Eucharist particularly in the light of Salvation History.

If the world nowadays looks upon the Church and Her message with new interest, Father Hans Kung has played a prominent role in this accomplishment. This young theologian, recently elevated to the post of Dean of the Catholic Theological Faculty at Tübingen, has helped to bring Catholic theology to the surprised attention of a wide circle of people. In *The Council in Action: Theological Reflections on the Second Vatican Council*, (Sheed and Ward: \$4.50) he has given us one of his most important studies. This book, written during the first session, is a collection of papers delivered to audiences of bishops, to newspaper men and pontifical colleges on the deeper issues confronting the Catholic bishops of the world. Leading figures of Vatican II do not always agree with Father Kung, but they were always eager to hear him and regarded him as in the tradition they themselves represent. The entire Catholic world should be aware of these issues and the fruitful theological thinking that has contributed to their solution.

If our parishes are to be authentic Christian communities, we must pay special attention to the religious problems of young people. *Crisis of Faith: the Religious Psy-*

chology of Adolescents by Pierre Babin handles the subject with learning and insight, particularly in a French context. But he has lots to say to us. (Herder and Herder: \$4.50)

Everybody has heard of the phenomenal success of the German play on Pius XII called "The Vicar" or "The Deputy." The author Rolf Hochhuth won immediate fame and provoked a controversy the world over. Desmond Fischer, editor of *The Catholic Herald* of London has written a timely pamphlet in answer to this play. In *Pope Pius XII and the Jews* (Paulist Press, 25c) this topflight journalist sets the whole subject in proper perspective and succeeds in refuting this personal attack on a great pope who did befriend the Jewish people in countless ways.

GUIDE

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GUIDE

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Guide Lights

READERS REPLY . . .

Our observations on converts in the United States have elicited a few replies. One correspondent writes, "There are very few who enter the Church without strong help from one or probably several Catholic laymen. Hence, the ratio of conversions is close to that of favorable contacts with Catholics." From this he goes on to suggest that where there are many Catholics there are not so many favorable contacts. The reason for this apparent contradiction is that where there is a profusion of Catholics "they tend to associate more and more with each other." From his own experience he finds this verified beyond question when the Catholics are identified not only by religion but by belonging to the same ethnic group.

Another correspondent thinks that even where there is contact, it is apt not to be favorable because of the poor catechetical training to which most Catholics have been exposed. His question: "What did our people have to communicate to their non-Catholic friends and relatives? The joyous Christian message?" His answer "Hardly." He foresees, however, a better state. "Things are now changing, but we still have a long way to go before our people—and clergy—are fully indoctrinated in their apostolic vocation, firmly established on the bedrock of a vital, energizing Faith."

REASON IN ROME . . .

There is reason for optimism. Things are changing and the change is being accelerated by the Second Vatican Council. The liturgical reforms in which it has engaged will surely assist in the formation of a more apostolic laity. These reforms will help directly by promoting an increase in positive instruction and by inculcating a sense of community. They will help indirectly by lending support and inspiration to an improved catechesis in the teaching of the young.

The Council is also firmly underscoring the true dignity of the lay state. We have had many statements from popes and bishops on this subject in modern times, but in so many places there has been little action to give substance to the words. Despite all

the high-sounding phrases the laity has not yet been widely incorporated into the mission of the Church. Many have lent their dedicated efforts to its structural progress but they have not been encouraged to any extensive apostolic engagement except in areas of action where there has been a singular pressure that could not be denied.

Now the proper place of the laity in the Church is being thrust upon the attention of all. Most importantly, the bishops are involved in discussion and they are forced by the logic of the discussion to make practical judgements, judgements which will influence their future decisions.

For the Church in this second half of the twentieth century not the least important debate at the Council is that which centers on Chapter Two of *De Ecclesia*—"On the People of God and Especially the Laity." This chapter points out that the laity are not passive members of the Church to be done for. They have their active role by virtue of their Baptism into the People of God. Their cooperation in the mission of the Church to the world is not simply invited, as though a favor were being conferred. It is commanded by reason of their solidarity in the one family redeemed by the death of Christ.

ROOM FOR THE LADIES . . .

Very often the synonym for laity is laymen. In terms of the work that is done it might be fairer to say laywomen. For every hardworking man helping the Church there must be at least three hardworking women. Cardinal Suenens has become their spokesman in the Council. He recommended that women as well as men be admitted as auditors. His address to the fathers was well received and it is reliably reported that Pope Paul is sympathetic to the idea. It is now expected that women prominent in international Catholic organizations will be selected. What, however, of the nuns? They are, as we say, in religion, but they are nevertheless members of the laity in the strictest sense. Some see a difficulty here because of the large number of sisterhoods. How could selection be made? But competent quarters in Rome pointed out that heads of groups of major superiors of the sisterhoods could be chosen without diffi-

culty. National conferences of major superiors of women's institutes have been established in many countries in recent years, and there is now in Rome the headquarters of the international union of women superiors general.

ARCHBISHOP AMMANN . . .

While Cardinal Suenens and others are attempting to give the Council a new look by including women as auditors, one ecclesiastic is advocating trimming in another direction. Archbishop Joachim Ammann, a retired bishop of Tanganyika, suggested that various papal representatives be declared obsolete. "Many persons think that such officials as Apostolic Nuncios, Internuncios and Delegates are shadows hiding the genuine face of the Church," he said. "The false impression is encouraged that, in one way or another, the Church is mixing in international politics. It is time to put the representation of the Holy See in various countries in the hands of Patriarchs and Bishops designated by their respective national conferences. These people know their own country better than outsiders, are thoroughly familiar with its language and traditions and thus are in a much better position to evaluate problems and to decide on appropriate solutions."

MARY IN THE CHURCH . . .

The bishop's proposal, which probably will go no further, reflected what is called by some the Christian unity movement, meaning the group within the Council which is most strongly committed to making the Church attractive to the separated brethren. Experts credited this movement with a narrow victory in the vote that determined that the role of Mary should not be discussed separately, but should be taken up under De Ecclesia.

The Rev. Gustave Weigel, S.J. explained: "Protestants find that Catholic doctrine tends to obscure the unique mediation of Christ. They feel that Mary is in conflict with Christ. They feel that in piling up appellations we are tending to make the Blessed Virgin the fourth person of the Holy Trinity."

Council experts said that the incorporation of the chapter on Mary in the De Ecclesia schema would not minimize any Marian dogmas, such as the Assumption or the Immaculate Conception, in order to make things palatable to Protestants, but would present Mariology in a way that they might find it less objectionable.

Father Bernard Haring said that the question is not a matter of "maximalists" or "minimalists" but of good doctrine. It is a matter of presenting the fullness of the doctrine as far as it enters into the balanced perspective of the Church and presents the veneration of Mary in its proper relation to the adoration of Christ.

The vote of 1,114 Council Fathers in favor of incorporation and of 1,074 supporting a separate schema is said to have followed days of spirited lobbying. Many national groups of bishops met to take a common stand on the issue. But an important note was struck by Cardinal Agagianian. He said: "No vote on either side can be construed as constituting any lessening of the dignity of the Blessed Virgin or any diminution of her prominent role in the Church."

CHURCH AND STATE . . .

Archbishop Lawrence J. Shehan of Baltimore has also taken a step to lessen tensions with non-Catholics in this country by calling upon the Council to eliminate a phrase "separation of Church and State" which appears in the schema on De Ecclesia. The portion of the schema to which he takes exception speaks of the "regrettable separation" of Church and State. He says it is ambiguous. Does it mean that any separation of Church and State is regrettable, or does it mean that it is regrettable that the things of the City of God are in conflict with the things of the City of the World? He says that most bishops believe that the second notion was the original intention, but as it stands it is subject to misinterpretation in this country at least. "The word 'separation' has become a fighting word for all of us. We want to get rid of the word 'regrettable' and, if the section cannot be suitably revised, to eliminate it entirely at this time." The Archbishop says that he favors eliminating it entirely because the whole question of the relations of Church and State are "too important to be introduced into the schema obliquely. If it is to be treated, it should be treated thoroughly."

Discussion on the problem of Church and State is of world-wide importance. But the issue is of particular significance to the Church in the United States. Fortunately, the matter has been explored by our eminent theologians. A great debt is owed to Father John Courtney Murray, S.J., distinguished American scholar, for his penetrating studies on this subject.

JOHN J. KEATING, C.S.P.

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Due to numerous requests, back issues of Vol. 3 of **Techniques for Convert Makers** (our former title) and Vols. 4 and 5 of **GUIDE** are available and ready for binding. An index is included with each set.

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